

# BRIDGES

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2013

## FASHION:

Two looks for Christmas casual and New Year's glitz **P. 16**

## MUSIC:

Our six favourite songs for the holiday season **P. 20**

## SHARP EATS:

Step-by-step guide to building your own gingerbread house **P. 26**

A STARPHOENIX COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



## TOO SOON FOR CHRISTMAS

LOSING HER SON MAKES THIS THE MOST DIFFICULT SEASON OF ALL FOR WANDA CAMPBELL **P. 11**

FREE

# INVENTORY

We want to hear from you: Tell us about your local business.  
Email [bridges@thestarphoenix.com](mailto:bridges@thestarphoenix.com)

## # BOXING DAY SHOPPING

### Five tips for smooth boxing day shopping

By Angelina Irmaci

#### DRESS WARM

Some stores may have lineups outside. Make sure you dress for the cold. Saskatchewan weather is more you and us waiting outside for a few minutes — hopefully the deal inside is worth it.

#### WEAR LAYERS

Many clothing stores don't open their fitting rooms on Boxing Day and the stores that do will likely have lineups. Items purchased on Boxing Day are often final sale. Avoid buying wrap, coats or waiting for a room by wearing a layer of tight-fitting clothing so you can try

items on over top. (It helps help with keeping warm.)

#### WATCH YOUR SHOPPING BAGS

When you're browsing (or trying) on clothing, over top of your layers) be sure to watch your belongings. In a busy mall and bag on the ground make it easy for those who are "shopping" to take someone else's purchases or belongings.

#### DOFT DRIVE

Parking — especially if you're headed downtown — will be a nightmare on Boxing Day. If you're planning a major trip it's a hassle to run out and put in more changes. Take the bus or carpool. (Check

out bonus — you're helping the environment.) If you think you'll have lots of bags or large purchases take a taxi. If you'll be trying a lot of items, go all out and hire a car service for the day.

#### SECOND GUESS THE SALES

Don't be fooled by flashy signs and red tags. Some stores' sales aren't actually that great. If you can look to see what the regular price of the items — sometimes it's only a few dollars less. Would you buy the item at that price if it wasn't for the sale tag? Some stores just place their already existing sale items together with no additional markdowns. Don't be fooled to ask how much you're actually saving.



Boxing Day shoppers looking for a steal with their Boxing Day Secret Sale that starts

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At Beaver Creek Conservation Area  
Hi, kids! My name's Chig, and I live at Beaver Creek Conservation Area. Visit my backyard with your family and friends and enjoy some live away from the city. (Stores a family Nature Activity Map Pack and take a look... nature awaits!)

Guess what kids? You can send your questions to me at the address below while working with Grandpa of Beaver Creek! I saw a book that had graphs in the middle of a plant and what looked like a pine cone on the end of a branch. Grandpa says that insects make these? What are they and how many insects make them? Xavior

Your grandmother sounds like a very wise woman, Xavior. Yes, many insects work with their host plants to make these structures that we call galls. There are over 1500 species of gall-inducing insects in North America. The ball on the plant you saw was probably made by the goldenrod gall fly. This tiny fly lays her egg in the stem of the goldenrod. The saliva of the larvae causes a chemical reaction in the plant causing it to grow, creating food and shelter for the baby fly. The gall that looked like a pine cone was made by the willow pine cone gall fly. These flies are both types of midges. At Beaver Creek, we also have galls on roses, and all sorts of leaves, made by other midges, and even wasps. Many of these insects spend the cold winter months in these shelters co-created by themselves and their plant partners. Good thing we have a healthy habitat for these incredible creatures.

Send your questions to me at the address below, then match the galls for the answers.  
Your pal, Chig  
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Beaver Creek, BC  
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Meewasin

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Lindsay Ansel and her mom Wendy Campbell are trying to keep the Christmas season after losing their brother Andrew. LP photo by Gene Dellosa in a 2013 October 2nd August. Images provided by their family.

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## Andrew Matte 1967-2013

This edition of *Bridges* is published on what should be one of the happiest days of the year. For those of us at *Bridges* and *The StarPhoenix*, the joys of the season are tempered by the loss of one of our own.

Our friend and colleague Andrew Matte died unexpectedly on Thursday, shortly before this edition went to press. As of this writing, we don't know the cause of death.

Our thoughts are with Andrew's wife, Camille Obertorelli, his family and his many friends.

It's hard to know what's right at times like these, but we can think of no more appropriate tribute than to share some of Andrew's work with the readers to whom he dedicated his professional life. Thus, the decision to run his last story in *Bridges* this week.

Andrew's compassion for the disadvantaged — one of his great strengths as a writer — shines through in this week's poignant, thought-provoking cover story.

We think it's one of his best.

We'll miss Andrew's quick wit, positive spirit and his unshakable belief in the power of journalism to help us know each other better. We're sorry he left us far too soon. Our lives have been enriched by the time we shared with him.

## BRIDGES COVER PHOTO BY DON HEALY

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## CITY NEWS

# BE A SANTA TO A SENIOR

## Volunteers deliver gifts to isolated seniors

By Angelina Irimaci

Christmas is a time to spend with friends, family and those close to you. But what if someone doesn't have family in the city? Or many friends close by? That's the case for many seniors in the community living in care homes — they may not have any visitors during the holidays.

That's why Greg Chorney, owner of Seniors' Franchise of Home Instead Senior Care, started the Be a Santa to a Senior program in Saskatoon. The Home Instead program has been in place around the world for about 30 years. Five years ago, Chorney decided it was time to bring it to Saskatoon. Gifts and Christmas cards are delivered to at least 100 seniors who may not have family close by to spend the holidays with.

"We were acutely aware of the need, and thought 'What a simple, yet profound way to brighten the Christmas season for those folks who potentially get overlooked,'" Chorney explains of his decision to start the program.

This year, around 400 gifts were delivered to 11 different facilities in the city. Workers at the care homes suggest gift ideas for residents who are more isolated than others. The seniors' names and gift suggestions were written on paper ornaments which decorated a number of trees in businesses around the city. The owners weren't aware the hand-picked gifts would soon be delivered to them.

Doreen Martin, director of care at Circle Drive Special Care Home suggests things like socks, blankets, slouch lotion and jewelry like pins as matter what age all of the ladies at the home have something are pretty.

"When the residents get these gifts they say 'Aww! How did they know I'd like this?' It's so nice," she says.

After only four days, all 200 paper ornaments were pulled up by secret routes around the city to Home In-



Staff: Shop in all areas while opening Christmas presents donated by people in the community for the Be a Santa to a Senior program at Circle Drive Special Care Home. **ORNAMENTS PHOTO BY MICHELLE ROSE**

stead created another 100, which were also gone within a few days.

Nice! 20 people get the gifts and cards ready and clear is 100 volunteers delivered all last week to our grand residents like Doreen Chase, 77, who's been living at Circle Drive Special Care Home for 18 years.

"It's the true meaning of Christmas," Chase says, whose closest relatives live in Toronto. "It's nice to

know that people in the community think about us. They remember that we are here and people who used to be walking around in the mall, and now they come to us."

This was the third year gifts have been delivered to the Circle Drive Special Care Home and Martin has been there each year to witness the excitement and appreciation — one resident was so touched she had

tears in her eyes.

"A lot of these people came from the community — these residents have given a lot to the community in the past — when the community recognizes them, I think it makes them feel they are not forgotten and that their lives still have meaning," she says. "It's one thing for your family to give you a gift, but when strangers give you gifts —

that's really touching."

Chorney adds that seniors agree to not only deliver the gifts, but to visit with them as well. The three volunteers Bridges talked to declined to be interviewed for the story — they wanted to spend their Christmas cheer anonymously.

[angelina@postandherald.com](mailto:angelina@postandherald.com)



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# IN THE CITY

# DECEMBER 19, 2013 - 9:28 A.M.

## Secret Santa has arrived



Elaine Heller helps Kayla Bakajyan find her gift package at the Secret Santa headquarters during its 20th anniversary in Saskatoon. The CWW Denny-Carr Secret Santa Foundation is an organization that provides food hampers and toys to less fortunate families every year during the Christmas season. @ReadyPresents on twitter, L.P. 100%

**YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE**  
Bridges wants to hear about your favourite place in Saskatoon. Email [bridges@thestarphoenix.com](mailto:bridges@thestarphoenix.com)

# # MY FAVOURITE PLACE

## Brunch brings family together for seventh year



Ross Wilson and his family at the Saskatoon Inn where they've celebrated Christmas with brunch for the last seven years. BRIDGES PHOTO BY NICOLE LEE BRAGG

By Angelina Irtines

Ross Wilson and his family have a special Christmas tradition. Each year just over 10 family members get together for a special brunch at Christmas Eve day at the Garden Café at the Saskatoon Inn. This year marks the family's seventh year getting together for the brunch. Two of his grand kids have grown up with the tradition and he hopes to continue it as his years to come.

**Q. How did the brunch tradition start at the Saskatoon Inn?**

**A. (Ross)** We've been doing it for 10 years and the past six have all

been here. We tried another place when we first moved to Saskatoon and the family wasn't happy with that. We had a holiday in Saskatoon and stayed at the Saskatoon Inn one time and we decided to come back here and everybody has been happy ever since. They love it.

**Q. What's the best part of the brunch?**

**A. (Bridges)** I think just the family being together. It's like the kick-start for the next couple days for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Christmas Eve we end up at the end of the day leading out to church, together and stuff. So it's a good

start to the whole day.

**Q. I bet you're made lots of special memories here. Any favourites?**

**A. (Ross)** About three years ago I'll overheard her mom. She was living in Victoria at the time and so her and I had made a deal that she was going to be coming home but we didn't tell her mom that she was coming home. On that morning — she had flown to the night before and stayed overnight at her brother's place — she came walking into the restaurant and her mom didn't know she was coming. She phoned in my Merry Christmas, good morning and stuff but phoned from in

said of the restaurant then walking up and poor Dad!

**Q. What happened, Son?**

**A. (Bridges)** I burst into tears and I cried the whole morning! I was talking to her on the phone and said, "I miss you, you can't be here." All of a sudden I look over and she's walking right to me. I made me cry.

**Q. Does your family have any other Christmas traditions?**

**A. (Ross)** Christmas Eve has always been a special time for us because we, as a family, end up in church. Then we head back to our place, have some music and stuff. It's the

precursor to actual Christmas morning. But we make the 26th into a very special family day.

**Q. What do you hope the family remembers from doing this?**

**A. (Ross)** It's funny because there's been several times when I say, "We might as well not do this anymore" and the children have sort of rebelled about that and say, "No, no this is one of our traditions. We always do this." So for us it's become a nice legacy. It's a great time and it brings us together the day before Christmas when there's no stress and no mess and we can spend that time together as a family.

# SPACES

Spaces celebrates beauty both indoors and out. If you have a living space we should highlight email [bridges@thephoenix.com](mailto:bridges@thephoenix.com)

## # CHRISTMAS LIGHTS DISPLAY

# Display includes 50,000 lights, 400 extension cords

By Angelina Irmaci

**WHO?** John and Doris Podolop

**WHERE?** In Sakakima's King George area, at 830 Hickson Ave.

**WHAT?** Their outdoor Christmas lights display synchronized to music. With around 50,000 lights included, it's impossible to miss the corner house while driving in the neighborhood. Aside from ordinary Christmas lights, many lawn decorations like angels, snowmen and chairs add flair to the yard. A massive tree filled with lights and a giant beer-steins tree, which sits atop the roof, is also part of the display. This year's newest additions are four huge leaping archways with lights that sync to the music. If you turn to the radio in your car to 106.7 FM, you can listen to the KJZZ midday show and watch the lights. If you're willing to leave the car, the music can be heard from outside of the home as well.

**WHEN?** The couple has always been big fans of Christmas lights and has been putting up a light display tied to music since 2006. Every summer they brainstorm what new addition they'll build then get to work at the end of September. They worked on it every weekend until the end of November. "We take our time doing it because it's time-consuming and we want to have fun doing it so we're not stressed out," says Doris, adding they try to get it all done before a gets really cold so they saved the lights on from 4 to 10:30 p.m. every night. The display will be up until O'Neil Christmas — Jan. 7.

*Continued on Page 10*





# SPACES

**WHY?** "We love Christmastime so much and we just wanted to share it with everybody" Elaine says. "It's great for getting people into the spirit. The neighbors look forward to the lights, the kids look forward to the lights." John adds:

**HOW?** When it comes to the light show, John hooks up an FM transmitter and programs the light controls so it's timed to the music. There are at least 400 extension cords to help power all the lights. The couple tries to buy lights and other decorations on sale after the season for the following year. This year there are 1,000 more lights than last year and the couple expects there to be even more next season. Elaine estimates they've spent \$2,000 on the display over the years.

The two build most of the display themselves, including the star (last year's addition) and the hanging arches. The arches are made out of two three-inch pipes anchored to rebar, which is poured into the ground. Elaine decided out the drums by wrapping gift bags from the dollar store around children's drum sets.

They've enlisted much needed help from their son and son-in-law for some assembly. The couple spent about 60 hours putting everything together — the huge light tree itself takes a full day to set up. But, it's all worth it.

"It's rewarding for us because we see how much pleasure it gives other people," Elaine says.



# ON THE COVER

I felt like I had failed as a parent.

— Thomasina Ross

# CHRISTMAS 2013

## Three unique reasons for the season

By Andrew Matto

With or without an appreciation of the religious component of Christmas, most agree that this season is a time to celebrate love, life and family.

So whether we're going to worship, watch children open gifts or march out to a neighbor's on cold, Christmas also serves as a benchmark. The Yuletide season can be a paradigm for life. We sometimes count the number of Christmas shared with someone we love, or take time to remember those we've lost.

This week, we share the stories of three people whose Christmas are unique this year for reasons that have little to do with traditions, but everything to do with family, love and community.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Thomasina Ross is grateful she's able to enjoy the holidays at home with her three children.

And she's even more pleased about what she would this Christmas.

"I didn't even want to think about me and my kids being homeless at Christmas," says Ross, as her 15-month-old son pulls himself onto her lap.

"This is a good place."

Troubled for this single mother of three began last year when she struggled to pay her bills out of the paycheck she received from her job as a janitor at Sierra Place. In arrears with her landlord and Subpoena, she was evicted without a place to go or money to rent elsewhere.

"I was trying my best. I wanted to do it on my own. I didn't want to go on social assistance," says Thomasina, who is eight months pregnant with her fourth child.

"I woke up one morning and the power was off. I had to make a decision whether to pay what rent I could and try to stay in the house or just move and stay with friends," she says.

She took her children, but left most of her belongings behind before moving in with her friend in her two-bedroom apartment. She and her kids — daughters Jasmine, 4 and Sierra, 3 and son Lyle, 1 — slept in the living room.

"I felt like I had failed as a parent," says Ross.

She began looking for apartments right away but soon realized she couldn't afford the typical \$1,300 (or more) rent for a place to accommodate her growing family.

"Most of the apartments out there are so expensive. And they all want last month's rent and a damage deposit."

Continued on Page 12



Sierra, Jasmine, Thomasina and Lyle Ross in their new home in Depue. BRIGGS PHOTO BY TON RUTZKE

I was trying my best. I wanted to do it on my own. I didn't want to go on social assistance.

— Ross



Therese Ross and her children recently drew new coats on Dec. 17 thanks to support from officials at Carleton Place Children's and other community agencies in Regina. (Photos by Tim O'Rourke)

But with the help of officials at Regina's Carleton Place Children's and money she had saved using social assistance and other government subsidies, she found a small three-bedroom house in Regina's North Central area for \$400 a month.

It was modestly clean and warm, and also down the street from her kids' grandmother.

"I picked this one because it's pretty handy. They had a room as part down the street," says Ross, adding the father of her kids is living in Alberta but is hoping to return in the new year.

Ross and her children moved in on Dec. 1 and officials at Carleton

Place Children's helped arrange for donations of clothing, a Christmas tree and other items. Among the items left on her list are a kitchen table, lamp and a toddler's bed for her son. "For the past couple of weeks, he's been sleeping with me."

But you won't hear Ross complain. She acknowledges the help she received from the community.

"I couldn't believe that this could happen just before Christmas," she says.

"I'm just glad we got here when we did."

Doreen Lloyd, a counsellor and housing support worker at Carleton Place Children's, says Ross's story

isn't unique. A large number of people have trouble finding affordable accommodation in Regina.

"We accept people (so) who they say. Once we get them housed, we try to get them supports and hope that we can build a report so that if they need help in the future, they feel comfortable coming to us," says Lloyd.

"I am Therese as a good mom. She is doing the right things."

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

For Wanda Campbell, the best way to mark the Christmas of 2013 is to read it.

The emotional wounds suffered when her 77-year-old son was killed in August are still raw; she says. Trying parents or choosing a tree is too difficult knowing her son isn't participating.

"I just can't celebrate Christmas. It's too hard," says Campbell, who's been unable to return to her work at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre.

"Christmas this year happens outside my house. It can't happen inside my house."

Lane Anshel was on his way to the Dairy Queen in White City from Pilot Butte when he was killed on the Trans-Canada Highway. Attempting to turn left at the

intersection Pilot Butte turned left, he was broadsided by a vehicle headed west. Lane was crossing the highway but stopped to avoid hitting a vehicle preparing to make a left turn toward Pilot Butte from the southeast lane.

Lane was a new driver but an RCMP officer told Campbell crash so have happened the same way at the same spot involving drivers of all ages, including a fatal crash several years ago.

In the weeks that followed, friends and family paid tribute to the General High School student by placing crosses at the crash site.



While people are out buying Christmas presents and putting up their Christmas trees, we were out buying wreathes to put on the crosses that are out on the highway — Wanda Campbell

Campbell is appreciative of the gesture which she begins around November of the long-standing request from the community to build an overpass and an off-ramp.

"Parents don't want their child to be killed, but we also hope that people will just slow down — they need an interchange there terribly. There is so much traffic on that intersection. And it's getting busier."

As the Christmas season approaches, Campbell didn't hesitate when she agreed to assist anything to do with the family celebration she typically looks forward to. To think of Christmas is to be reminded of Lane's death, she says, which she admits she is still struggling with.

"While people are out buying Christmas presents and putting up their Christmas trees, we were out buying wreathes to put on the crosses that are out on the highway," she says.

Continued on Page 14



A remembrance cross is placed for 17-year-old Lane Andrew Campbell (left) at the site where he died in August on the Hwy-Campbell Highway. Submitted by TFWT



Wanda Campbell and Lacey Arnold are remembering their son and brother Lane this Christmas. Submitted by TFWT



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I just can't celebrate Christmas. It's too hard. Christmas this year happens outside my house. It can't happen inside my house. — Campbell

The only sign of the season in Campbell's home is in her son's room, where a small tree belonging to Lane was set up and decorated with ornaments given to him by his grandmother.

"I didn't hear the notion of celebrating Christmas morning at home, she will be at her mother's home with her daughter Lindsay, and preparing for a family get-together."

"That's the first time we've done that. But in the afternoon, we're flying to Las Vegas."

"We thought it was a good idea to just get away," says Campbell.

Campbell is also comforted by her daughter's company. Lindsay interrupted her studies in Osaka, Japan after her brother's death to be at home with her mother. "I am so grateful to her like you wouldn't believe."

Campbell has also reached out to a local support group and attended a candlelight vigil attended by fans, but celebrating the lives of lost loved ones. She hopes to continue her involvement with Compassionate Friends, which hosts meetings for grieving families.

"I am looking for other parents so I can perhaps see how they have been able to survive, because none there. I don't think I am going to be able to," says Campbell.

\*\*\*\*\*

Steve's first gift that year came about three weeks ago.

That's when government officials received the tip that the truck involved in the crash from his vehicle, which had been installed with a remote control after he pleaded guilty to negligent driving.

"To me, that was my Christmas present. It gave me my freedom back."

The story of Steve's break with the law and personal recovery began in the summer of 2011 when police received calls about a vehicle weaving from lane-to-lane as it sped down the highway. It was Steve. He was charged, spent a few hours behind bars, his driver's license suspended.

At the time, the circumstances of that July 5 were troubling. Today Steve has positive thoughts about the incident. It was an opportunity to



An amber alert back device for convicted repeat drivers. (Photo maybe I'm among my own life here, and maybe I'm saving someone else.) — says Steve's 18-year-old

turn his life around without causing more trouble than he already had. That is exactly what I needed to get my life back on track. And I am grateful that I didn't kill or hurt anybody," says Steve. He also asked to not publish his real name in exchange for allowing us to share his story. "Today I live every day as a blessing."

Steve's history with alcohol began years ago when he discovered that booze was the perfect antidote to the discomfort of his own feelings. He then began to drink more and more.

He acknowledged his alcoholism years ago, sought treatment and lived several years as a sober person. However, he grew overconfident and figured an occasional drink wouldn't do any harm until he found himself

losing alcohol as a crutch just as he'd done prior to counseling.

Coming out of treatment I had four or five years of great sobriety that you lose sight of it. And you think 'maybe I'm OK now,' Steve says. "This is a tricky disease. It'll catch you when you don't expect it."

He spent years on and off the wagon, living before taking his to the bottle — until that July evening.

Things were never bad enough that I found myself saying 'I can't live like this anymore.' But that day came in 2011. I saw then that I could lose everything. And I actually thought I had."

Steve's reluctant to share details

of his personal life, but at the time of his arrest, he summed his career in management and life as a husband and father of three was over. Since then, he discovered sobriety to his alcoholism was the only way to remain sober. He consulted to regain his Michigan Anonymous meetings and decided that a future without alcohol would help him protect his life, family and career.

"I have a great job, a great wife, great kids and wonderful family — to me, that's the most important part of my life. I don't think that, then I don't have anything."

He's also learned how to cope with his emotions. He discovered that emotions can be worked through without using booze to numb under-

neath feelings.

"If I felt happy or sad, it would be a trigger. Alcohol let me out of that. But I learned that it's OK to cry. It's OK to laugh. These are all things that make people. And it's OK to let all that happen."

And while this is a season where alcohol is shared at many Christmas celebrations, Steve prefers to think of his impaired driving arrest as a gift that keeps on giving.

The last two and a half years have been the best of my life. Some things have happened in my life that I never would have happened if I hadn't been sober," he says.

"I guess maybe I'm among my own life here. And maybe I'm saving someone else."



# FASHION YXE

Have an outfit you've styled for an upcoming event?  
Send a photo to [bridges@thestarphoenix.com](mailto:bridges@thestarphoenix.com)

## # HOLIDAY FASHION

### Lisa Blehm: Two holiday looks

By Ashley Martin

Lisa Blehm doesn't have to go far to dress up her casual-girly look for the holidays. She's manager of Cade's Style Lounge and has a hand in buying stock for the new Rotana store.

"It's like shopping for a lamp and it's just fun," says Blehm.

Needless to say, the fashion lover has a few style items on her Christmas wish list.

#### CHRISTMAS CASUAL

For Christmas Day comfort is key "because we're going from house to house and visiting family." She'll use accessories to dress up a casual base.

**1. EARRINGS:** Hilbert & Berk

**2. NECKLACE:** Cade

**3. VEST:** Cade "I'm loving fur vests right now and we have a lot of them."

**4. TOP:** Joe Fresh

**5. WATCH:** Michael Kors

**6. LEGGINGS:** American Apparel

**7. SHOES:** Cade "I always be in heels because I'm kind of snooty."

#### NEW YEAR'S EVENING WEAR

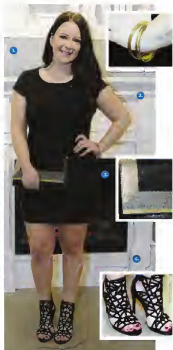
For a night out, Blehm gets a little fiercer, opting for "animal black dresses... maybe just a little bit of sparkle."

**1. DRESS:** Winners

**2. BRACELETS:** Aldo

**3. CLUTCH:** Cade

**4. SHOES:** Cade "A lot of girls don't like to wear open-toed heels in the winter time, but I think it's OK to do that. You have to make a sacrifice sometimes to look good."



For Christmas, Lisa Blehm goes casual (left) while New Year's Eve warrants a dressier look. BRIDGES PHOTOS BY BRYAN SCHLESSEER

# READ MY BOOK

**LOCAL AUTHORS:** Writers tell us what makes their book worth reading

#ERNEST SOENKERT

## The Magic Christmas Train

Today my nephew Len is an athletic fellow who is over six feet tall!

When Len was still very young and using a high chair he came to stay at our house because his father was hospitalized and Len stayed with us for some time and our family more or less adopted him. It was always a point of interest to know what Len was doing as he grew up and entered elementary school.

I decided to write "The Magic Christmas Train" so that I could in-



Ernest Soenkert

clude Len in a story.

Childhood caught up in the magic of Christmas which involves Santa, gifts, decorations, family gatherings and special foods. However in The Magic Christmas Train at first Len was on one of the things associated with Christmas.

It's winter time and the weather is cold. His parents are away from home and he didn't even get a chance to tell Santa what he wanted for Christmas. This makes him very unhappy because Christmas Eve has arrived. Before going to bed, Len looked out his window and saw the old steam engine train that was at the railway station. Len knew the train didn't work anymore but before he fell asleep Len wished it could take him to see Santa

Len suddenly found himself at the old railway station where the Great Master Toy Maker invited him to climb aboard the train. Len is only wearing his pyjamas and slippers but there must be magic around because he's not even cold! Soon though there are no railway tracks, the old steam engine begins to move away from the station and travel into the countryside. The train cars are full of elves and they are putting toys together. The train stopped occasionally and the completed toys were taken outside by the elves. Many assembled toy parts were loaded on the train.

The Great Master Toy Maker told Len that he had been sick and that was why not all of the toys were

ready for Christmas. When the train stopped again, Len went outside and he was very surprised to see Santa. Santa was taking the finished toys to deliver to boys and girls.

After the toys had all been put together Len was even lucky enough to get a ride home in Santa's sleigh. On Christmas Day his parents were home and he was very surprised to see that Santa has brought him the special toy he wanted.

The Magic Christmas Train is printed by Trafford Publishing. The book is available in Region 1, Colon and Chignecto. It's available by special order through most Saskatchewan bookstores and online at [www.infodirect.com](http://www.infodirect.com). Also available are Soenkert's previous books. The



Great Alphabet Reminder Book and Christmas Dinosaur To Go. Ernest Soenkert is a retired teacher who lives in Regina.

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# ON THE SCENE

## # SYPE 2013 BOARD ELECTION NIGHT AND CHRISTMAS MIXER

A well-dressed crowd of about 45 young professionals convened in a hip downtown space — the Rouge Gallery — on Dec. 19 for the SYPE (Starkville Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs) Christmas mixer. Candidates for SYPE's 2014 board made their election speeches while members enjoyed free appetizers and drinks.

SYPE's mission is to promote business growth for its members by providing networking events and regular luncheon seminars. Members also take on corporate challenges to support worthy causes in the community.

1. Stephanie Yorgand Nathan Rhodes

2. Kaitley Kinschuk, Danielle Witting and Scarlett Featherstone

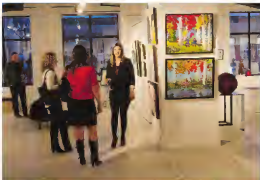
3. Katie Semelag (left) and Kelly Bode

4. Joe and Caitlin Gill

5. Jen Pavel (left) and Ian Dawson

6. Doreene Kuznetsov

**BRIDGES PHOTOS  
BY RICHARD MARJAN**



## EVENTS

## # MUSIC

Thursday, Dec. 24

**Firewater and the Roadies**  
 Ends on Broadway,  
 817 Broadway Ave

**Moderley**  
 Amphig Centria,  
 422 10th St. E.

**Red Blaine**  
 Star's Place,  
 106-108 Ruth St. E.

**Friday, Dec. 27**

**Jeff Huff**  
 Ends on Broadway,  
 817 Broadway Ave

**Plans Friday w/ Paul**  
 Sechen  
**Jazz Trekker Series: The**  
**Private Collective**  
 The Basement,  
 232 Fourth Ave. N.

**Defwined**  
 Army & Navy Veterans Club,  
 393 First Ave. N.

**The Nickles**  
 McNelly Robinson,  
 3130 Eighth St. E.

**The Station w/ Anson and**  
**Elina (Shoreless Jaws) and**  
**Y Little**  
 Amphig Centria,  
 422 10th St. E.

**Red Blaine**  
 Star's Place,  
 106-108 Ruth St. E.

Saturday, Dec. 26

**Jeff Huff**  
 Ends on Broadway,  
 817 Broadway Ave

**Decker Plains Music**  
**Decks Series The Barrel-**  
**man**  
 The Basement,  
 232 Fourth Ave. N.

**Lady Hawk**  
 Nurma Lepkin,  
 321 Louise St.

**Defwined**  
 Army & Navy Veterans Club,  
 393 First Ave. N.

**Phoenix**  
 Downtown Lupton,  
 555 Spadina Crs. W.

**The Last Jays**  
 McNelly Robinson,  
 320 Eighth St. E.

**Band Swap VII**  
 Amphig Centria,  
 422 10th St. E.

**Red Blaine**  
 Star's Place,  
 106-108 Ruth St. E.

Sunday, Dec. 29

**Lady Hawk**  
 Nurma Lepkin,  
 321 Louise St.

Tuesday, Dec. 31

**Seven Street**  
 Ends on Broadway,  
 817 Broadway Ave

**Henry Startup (Leauge)**  
**Lady Hawk (Hail)**  
 Nurma Lepkin,  
 321 Louise St.

**The Wings**  
 Downtown Lupton,  
 555 Spadina Crs. W.

**New Year's Dance w/ The**  
**Don McConnel Band**  
 Town Team Tavern,  
 1500 Fairview Dr.

**New Year's Eve Bash: Matt-**  
**inson Blaine w/ Nightline**  
 O'Brien Court Centre,  
 241 Second Ave. S.

**Saskatoon's New Year's**  
**Even House Party: One With-**  
**outs Home and DJ Anchor**  
 Mainland Park,  
 503 Royal St. W.

**New Year's Eve: The Bel-**  
**lany Brothers w/ Megan**  
**Mench**  
 Dakota Dunes Casino,  
 204 Dakota Dunes Way,  
 Witscoak

**New Year's Eve w/ Young**  
**Resurgences, Platte Pridges**  
**and Mark Leape**  
 Amphig Centria,  
 422 10th St. E.

**Twelve New Year's Eve**  
**Party w/ DJ Mike Debra and**  
**Chaz-L**  
 Twinkle Nightclub,

1201 Alberta Ave.

**New Year's Eve Bash w/**  
**Northern Belle**  
 Star's Place,  
 106-108 Ruth St. E.

## # ART

**Vandal Art Gallery**  
 345 1st St. S. 520 Spadina  
 Crs. S. will present artists  
 include: *Rebuilding Modernity*  
 and *They Made a Day for a*  
*Day Here* Gellie, the Artist  
 by Artists' Membership exhibi-  
 tion by Cory Schowatz and  
 M. Merritt. Brian MacIsaac-  
 Brown, The Gallery Shop has  
 a Bidding Day Sale Dec. 30  
 Tickets for the Jan. 11 LUGO  
 art party and fundraiser go  
 on sale Jan. 2. Visit [www.vandal.ca](http://www.vandal.ca).

**The Gallery at Frances Mar-**  
**ion Library**  
 Until Dec. 27 at Frances Mar-  
 ion Library On the Grid,  
 works by Louise Ingvaldsen,  
 Judith Gifford, Kathryn  
 Green and Mary-Anne  
 Taylor.

**Centre Street Galleries**  
 Until Dec. 29 in The Centre  
 Street at Centre Street  
 Club, E. Erin Morrison-Klein-  
 Whalen, Scott Peckham, Spill  
 5 Photo Art, Rosemary Harris,  
 Don Prosser, Scott School  
 Division and the Saskatoon  
 Public School Board.

**Station Arts Centre, Rea-**  
**theries**  
 Until Dec. 30 at 701 Railway  
 Ave., in ReaTher's Theatre  
 inside the One by Mainline  
 Arts and Denise Esp-Atter. Tru-  
 ding Centre - No Entry Tax  
 Small to Twelve, Jan. 3-31.

**The Gallery/Art Placement**  
 Until Dec. 31 at 228 Third  
 Ave. S. "The Season, small  
 works holiday show.

**Vancouver Museum of**  
**Canada**  
 Until Dec. 31 at 540 Spadina  
 Crs. S. Money, Sovereignty  
 & Power: The Paper Com-  
 munity of Revolution by Volume  
 1971-1993

**Black Spruce Gallery**  
 Through December at North-  
 side. An Insign on Highway 2  
 World by Four new artists

**Jody Bruce, Sandra Chama-**  
**man, John Emerson and**  
**Jennifer Sapechko**

**Backstage Centre**  
 Through December at 100  
 Grainger Crs. Delay in  
 the Details, paintings and  
 photography by Silas von  
 Werner

**Defenisher Canada Centre**  
 Through December at 101  
 DeFenisher Pl. Took the  
 19g: The Story of Aye  
 Canada.

**Affinity Gallery**  
 Until Jan. 4 at 813 Broadway  
 Ave. 30th Dimensions, Juried  
 by award winning artists  
 Michael Housack and Brian  
 Rankin. A closing reception  
 will be held Jan. 3, 7 p.m. to  
 9 p.m.

**Galleries Revenant**  
 Until Jan. 5 at 221 Broadway  
 Ave. Seeking Menstrine,  
 new works by Kustly Brad-  
 shaw

**St. Theresa Mary Gallery**  
 Jan. 5 through Feb. 3 at 1437  
 College St. Kick back by  
 Marique Martin. An opening  
 reception will be held Jan. 10  
 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**Mika Coffee Bar**  
 Until Jan. 26 at 411 Howard St.  
 Photography by David Le-  
 week, an sale and display.

**Westlud Library**  
 Through January in Westlud.  
 Waterlilies, art for the  
 season and the holiday

**Herminie House Store-**  
**case**  
 Until Feb. 3 at 720 Broad-  
 way Ave. Contemporary,  
 elegant, timeless. Scarves  
 and Shirts by the Textile Ar-

**Black Spruce Gallery**  
 Open through the winter at  
 Northside. Ansign on High-  
 way 2 After dark, a group  
 show

# SPECIAL  
 EVENTS

**Boxing Day Movie**  
 Dec. 26 3 p.m., at the  
 Menzies Valley Centre. A  
 women-themed movie. Pop-

What you need to know to plan your week.  
 Send events to [bridges@thestarphoenix.com](mailto:bridges@thestarphoenix.com)

com and/or are available  
 and you can bring your own  
 snacks. Call 326-668-888

**Kashiba Winter Music**  
**Festival**  
 Dec. 29 at Mainland Park,  
 A Western Canadian winter  
 music festival. Featuring  
 electronic art and music  
 and artist 2 Chant. Visit  
[www.kashibawinterfest.ca](http://www.kashibawinterfest.ca).

**The Real Me, Don Comedy**  
**Tour**  
 Dec. 28, 7:30 p.m., at TCU  
 Place. Former school teacher  
 turned comedian Gerry De  
 performs

**New Year's Eve Sale**  
 Dec. 31, 7 p.m. cocktails &  
 8 p.m. dinner at TCU Place  
 Saskatoon Summer Pleas-  
 ure celebration 50 years of  
 musical theatre in 2014. A  
 reunion for alumni, patrons  
 and the public. Shelters, a  
 live show of some favorite  
 songs from the last 50 years,  
 and a dance with DJ Robert  
 Mitchell, all leading to the  
 midnight countdown. Visit  
[www.saskatoonsummerpleasures.ca](http://www.saskatoonsummerpleasures.ca).

**Latin New Year's Eve Fiesta**  
 Dec. 31, 9 p.m., at Albert  
 Community Centre, 610 Clare-  
 ence Ave. S. Presented by  
 Latin dance academy Doris  
 Herrera. With a dedicated  
 Bachata/Salsa dance room,  
 Latin dance classes and a  
 lively entertainment room. A  
 fundraiser for the fabulous  
 International Saskatoon  
 Salsa & Bachata Festival.  
 Call 306-431-5886 or email  
[info@danstommo.ca](mailto:info@danstommo.ca)

**New Year's Eve Dance and**  
**Late Lunch**  
 Dec. 31, 9 p.m., at The Ger-  
 man Cultural Centre,  
 700's and 800's Main St.  
 Call 306-244-6686

**SNP Millie's Enchanted Fan-**  
**est and Holiday Light Tour**  
 Until Jan. 5, 5:30 p.m. to  
 7 p.m., at the Saskatoon  
 Cemetery Park & Zoo. The  
 drive-through Christmas  
 display features 150th  
 anniversary funds raised  
 support of the Saskatoon  
 Zoo Foundation and the  
 Saskatoon City Hospital  
 Foundation.



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# MUSIC

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## #HOLIDAY MUSIC

# The best festive songs are originals

By Ashley Martin

Every year, I look forward to putting up my tree and finally — finally! — turning on the tunes I've reserved for December. And while I love basking in "Reynold's Official Christmas Classics" playlist (they exclusively play holiday songs throughout December), there's only so much Celine Dion and Michael Bublé this girl can take.

Over the past few years, I've created a pretty extensive Christmas music collection. My rhyming Christmas library is up to 725 songs — I like diversity — but there are a few tried-and-true artists I play more than most. And they generally seem to favour original songs that haven't been covered to death.

Here are my six go-to holiday albums

### Ernie the Gnome and Tim Wheeler — This Is Christmas (2011)

This oldie-but-not-so-pappy and sage album, and the only song I recognized was "Marshmallow World," which is a really different cover choice. Skip the Mic is a semi-saucy love song. Zoukba Christmas describes a festive zombie apocalypse. But my favourite has got to be "Don't Call Me Christmas," an apocalyptic song from the perspective of Mrs. Claus. "Give my whole life to you and what do I get? I've just so nearly."

### Lonette Lynn — A Country Christmas (1966)

The queen of country music (at least, my queen) — I love Lonette! covered a lot of holiday favourites here. And the best songs on the album are two original, and all-star tracks in the flesh, the first is Santa Claus and the second is a husband. "I Walk With You Santa Claus" shows classic, "When he goes crawling through the snow I hope he fills 'em I Was I Decorate Your Christmas Tree" that year tells that good-for-swinging man he can stop and wait for it. "Give, because" your life is so hard and your love doesn't shine, I need it here is working that time."

### Jeffery Straker — Cowboy Music for Christmas (2013)

This is a new favourite to my relation,

and just a single. But the song is a song written by Jeffery Straker but the rest on the band. It's super catchy and super cozy — just the ticket for a Christmas single. The title says it all, I'm a sucker for romance. "You're coming home for Christmas. This helps make it my love, my love of you." The song reminds me of the support across in Love Actually, or the "You Marriages" commercial where the doll carries his son's holiday photo around all those years later. It's just top of your heartstrings good.

### Howie Workman — Pull Me In (2011)

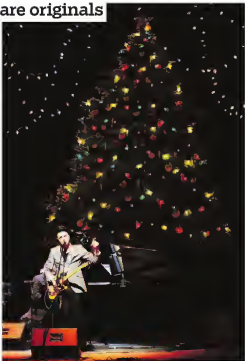
Two years ago I discovered two of my favourite Christmas traditions. The first was Stuart McLean's Vinyl Cuts Christmas Tour. The second was the holiday album of his second group, In 2011 (2011). Oh, the years I missed! Howie Workman released Almost a Pull Me In, an EP of original Christmas songs. Two years later he rerecorded the songs and released Pull Me In. These albums are pure genius. It's hard to choose just one favourite song, but "Three Generations" always makes me tear up — it's about "three generations in the kitchen all at once." Then there's Almost a Pull Me In. "Gave Me Some Song," which is adorable — a love song that hangs on making a song.

### Patty Loveless — Bluegrass, White Snow (2002)

We check all of covers, but with a bluegrass twist, these 10 standards feel new. There are some originals, the oldie track is my favourite, a fitting mandolin-heavy tune about joyful Christmas in Kentucky where Loveless grew up. "All the best times worked out as the music filled the air." The harmonies by Dolly Parton just add to the spirit.

### She and Him — A Very She and Him Christmas (2010)

This isn't a new one, but it's original, this compilation by duo Zooey Deschanel and M. Ward has been one of my go-to since I bought it. It's fun. Deschanel's voice is soft, so it doesn't overtake a room, and, because they're all cover songs, you don't feel the need to pay too much attention



Howie Workman performs during the Vinyl Cuts Christmas Tour in 2011. Photo courtesy of MMS Media Group/PAVE



# GARDENING

• LEGENDS AND MEANINGS

## The story behind seasonal plants

By Eri Svendsen

There are many plants associated with the season that is upon us, many of them rooted (and/or in the past). But they have become more decorative than so much so that their original meanings have become forgotten or pushed aside.

Being green in evergreen hedges at this time of year has been practiced since at least the Roman times. They were used to decorate homes during Saturnalia in celebration of Saturn, the god of agriculture. Because they were plants that "did not die," evergreens represented good health and fortune. As for using the whole evergreen tree instead of just branches, there are a number of legends describing the first Christmas tree, dating back as far as the seventh century. But it is more likely that the first Christmas tree was created in 1605 in Alsace, France (then part of Germany). Martin Luther is credited with introducing lights to replicate his experience of seeing stars that glowed through the trees in the forest. His used was candles, not a recommended practice to day. Luckily, in 1881 electric Christmas lights were invented and today we have energy-efficient strings of LEDs.

Evergreen wreaths have also been around for centuries. The ekele itself symbolizes eternity and the evergreen branches signify immortality. Decorated with dried fruits, flowers and seeds, the wreath then represents the annual cycle of the seasons.

Rosemary at Christmas is now mostly used as a seasoning in turkey stuffing, at least in my house. But it used to feature more prominently during the season. Aside from a couple of legends involving the Mother Mary, it was commonly strewn on church floors and in the home. When rolled on, it released a pleasant aroma and it was associated with friendship, fidelity and remembrance.

The poinsettia is a relatively recent import to the Christmas season. Discovered by Joel Poinsett during his time as U.S. ambassador to Mexico in the 1820s, poinsettias are now the second-most popular plant associated with Christmas. The legend on how it came to be a beautiful red of a poor Mexican girl who had nothing to give the baby Jesus. Her cousin told her that at dusk, rather than the gift was so low as to, as long it was given with love. So the little girl picked a bouquet of weeds by the roadside to offer to the baby Jesus at the



Nothing says Christmas quite like a basket of poinsettias. PHOTO COURTESY LEE BIST

nativity scene on Christmas Eve. The other children teased her but then the weeds miraculously transformed into the bright red flowers we know today. From that night forward, they were known as "Flores de Noche Buena" or "Flowers of the Holy Night."

One myth to dispel, poinsettias are not deadly toxic. According to POISSONIER, a 50-pound child would have to consume at least 500 pounds leaves before beginning to approach a fatal dose. In a review of nearly 20,000 cases of poisonous exposures, 98 per cent did not require

treatment in a health facility. And not a single death has ever been documented. Some people may experience skin irritation from the sap and if consumed, leaves may cause stomach upset, vomiting or diarrhea.

Kiwanoas, while celebrated during the week between Christmas and New Year's (Dec. 30 — Jan. 1), is not a religious observance. Instead it is a celebration of African American culture and values, first celebrated in 1867. Two of the Kiwanoas symbols are plants. Maize (corn, oats and vegetables) results in black and harvest

festivals or gatherings where pig, sharing, unity and thanksgiving were the true fruits of labor. Wilkerson (poinsettia) is a single ear of corn, one ear for each child in the family that it goes beyond a simply remembering of children — it is a recognition that it takes a village to raise a child, involving the whole community as each one contributes to the patience, love and understanding.

This column is provided courtesy of the San Antonio Personal Society (www.sanantoniohistory.org/personalsociety)

# OUTSIDE THE LINES

## # Colouring contest

Each week Stephanie McKay creates a timely illustration meant to please kids of all ages.

Children can colour the page, have a picture taken with the finished product and email it to [bridges@stephenmckay.com](mailto:bridges@stephenmckay.com). One winner will be chosen each week.



Merry  
Christmas  
— FROM —  
BRIDGES  
&  
QC



Last week's contest winner is Derek Johnson. Thanks to everyone who submitted entries!



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## WINE WORLD

# OSBORNE ORO DARK AND SWEET SHERRY

## Turn Christmas cake into extra-special treat

By James Romanow

Christmas Cake is one of the older cultural customs during Christmas. Essentially this is a bread cooked to the density of a pain de campagne. A good cake will be loaded with dried fruits and nuts. A bad one is like eating pre-masticated croutons.

I have had my number of excellent Christmas cakes over the years. It took me a while but I worked out what the difference is between the good, the bad and the ugly. Christmas cake is meant to be microwaved in Japan. Some have skipped this step. The result is about as tasty as a dose of radioactive iodine.

So then, serve you are at your mother-in-law's place, attempting to convince her that you are the perfect spouse and her young ladyboy. You know she will feed you her version of "what hell, and you will need to pretend you like it. Here's how (what's more if you're smooth enough you can make the whole family down the path of wickedness. Christmas cake will never be the same).

First, buy a 600 ml bottle of Oro Sherry for every three people attending. This will not bankrupt you as it only costs \$25. At that price you can afford to feed a Christmas dinner gathering. Second, pour everyone a very stiff shot in a coffee mug. (No coffee!) You need a mug be-

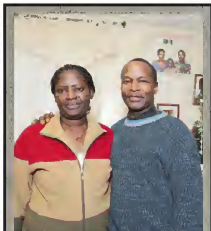


cause they are all about to be taught the joys of drinking. With luck they have already mastered this with a much less pleasurable coffee and doughnut.

This stuff is an extraordinary dessert wine. It smells and tastes of maple syrup, walnuts and dried fruit. There are few desserts that match this.

Osborne Oro Dark and Sweet Sherry \$25 each

More great drinks in the Monday paper and on Twitter @drhoast



Francis and Mary Kargbo, who were married in Sierra Leone, are expecting a child in December.

## Next week in BRIDGES

Francis and Mary Kargbo's shipment of hope to family in Sierra Leone is just in time for Christmas

## Crossword/Sudoku answers

C	H	A	I	S	P	F	E	A	P	E
H	O	R	O	F	L	U	E	E	A	L
O	N	E	O	F	O	U	R	S	R	E
M	U	L	T	I	T	O	S	I	N	A
P	S	I	S	C	O	R	E	P	A	O
N	E	B	I	G	R	I	N			
M	A	G	S	G	R	A	N	D	O	P
A	I	O	T	E	D					
S	A	L	T	I	S	V	I	N	E	
T	I	M	I	L	A					
M	I	D	I	E	A	R				
J	A	L	L	E	A	R	N			
A	L	A	M	O						
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7	2	5	3	8	4	1	6	9		
8	9	1	5	6	7	2	4	3		

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# SHARP EATS

See a food trend you think deserves a highlight in Bridges? Email [bridges@thestarphoenix.com](mailto:bridges@thestarphoenix.com) or visit Bridges on Facebook

## # SHARP EATS

# How to make your own gingerbread house

By Michelle Berg  
and Jenn Sharp

We've all been there — the pre-made gingerbread house kit at the grocery store is calling out to you with promises of easy fun for the little people. You pick one up, take it home and let the kids loose. The only problem with these kits? Your gingerbread house will look the same as everyone else's who bought the kit. If you could save time about organizing this all the power to you. If not, we've got a recipe for homemade gingerbread and the steps to making your own house (and other creations).

Bridges photographer Michelle Berg went all out this year making a Noah's Ark for the annual competition held during the Festival of Trees at the Western Development Museum in Scottsdale. (Bridges related to Nevada the Bookschlemmer MS Clinical Research Chair Campaign.)

Making your own gingerbread house could be a great way to spend time with the kids on cold days indoors during the school break, too. Read on for Michelle's instructions and send us pictures of your final product!

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[bell@jennsharp.com](mailto:bell@jennsharp.com)



The ingredients you'll need to make homemade gingerbread



Combine the batter and brown sugar



Mix in the eggs



Roll the rest of the ingredients out



I've been going to the Festival of Trees since I was young. I was always fascinated by the creations displayed on Gingerbread Lane. Each year I told myself I would make one to enter. This year I finally did.

I didn't feel like making a typical house so I got a little creative and went with Noah's Ark, mainly because I thought that making animals out of fondant would be fun.

## Gingerbread

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup molasses
- 1 cup butter
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp ginger
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp cloves
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp vinegar
- 4 cups flour

## METHOD

1. First start with the blueprints. Measure out the sides of your house and roof on paper or cardboard then cut them out. With the ark I made the sides, the floor, supporting beams, the top house and the roof (with holes for the giraffe heads).
2. In an electric mixer, cream butter and brown

- sugar until fluffy. Mix in eggs and salt. Beat in molasses, baking soda, baking powder and vinegar.
3. Add flour. Mix on low speed until thoroughly combined. Divide dough into thirds and wrap in plastic. Chill for at least 1 hour.
4. Heat oven to 375°F. On a well-floured surface, roll out dough to 1/8 inch thick.

5. Cut into desired shapes. Place dough shapes on parchment-lined baking sheets (You can make an imprint on the dough before baking to look like a log house or bridge). Bake 10 minutes, or until gingerbread is firm in the center but not dark around the edges.
6. Leave gingerbread to cool and harden overnight or for at least 24 hours.

# SHARP EATS



Roll into a ball and roll/grade for two hours.



Roll gingerbread shapes on parchment paper.



Ingredients for the royal icing: the "glue" for your house.



Michelle Day's completed Nounix A1.



Fondant giraffes and elephants.

## ROYAL ICING

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 large egg whites
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 3 cups powdered sugar

### METHOD

1. Beat egg whites, lemon juice and powdered sugar until fluffy. 7 to 8 minutes with electric mixer on low speed. The meringue will transfer to an airtight container (poured using lidless quickly when exposed to air) and refrigerate up to one week. Stir well with a flexible spatula before using.

### CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

1. Find a strong piece of cardboard or ply wood for the base. I have used a cutting board in the past.
2. The gingerbread pieces may have rounded off and during the baking process. You can shave them down with a knife to ensure all pieces fit together.
3. Use each gingerbread piece side together and hold them in place. Once secure, finish with the royal icing. The royal icing acts as glue — once dry, it won't be going anywhere.

### TIME FOR FUN —DECORATING!

I chose to make animals out of fondant but you can also buy bulk candy and cover your houses with tasty treats.

### FONDANT ANIMALS

This is when you can be creative and feel like you're back in kindergarten playing with Play-Doh.

1. I bought white fondant from Michael's and made different creatures using food oil coloring.
2. Roundish disks cut flat so you have to be quick. Be sure to keep the pieces you're not using in a sealed container.

3. Shape your fondant into whatever creature you like and put it on the house.

I finished my sets off with a little bit of shredded wheat to look like hay.

Now you can put your gingerbread creation on display, or eat it!

(Caution: This gingerbread recipe is meant to be sturdy — you may break a tooth.)



Fondant lion.



Fondant giraffe.



Fondant bird.

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